GEOPHYSICAL MODEL OF CHROMITE DEPOSITS

COX AND SINGER MODEL NO. 2a & 8a Compilers- A.K. Kospiri. W.D. Heran

A. Geologic Setting

Two major deposit types are included, both hosted within mafic-ultramafic complexes; stratiform and podiform types.

Stratiform: Within cratonal, mostly Precambrian shield areas, as repetitively layered mafic-ultramafic intrusions. Layered chromite in lower intermediate zone of layered gabbro-peridotite, which may be traced for miles. Chromite occurs in massive to disseminated layers with cumulate texture.

Podiform: Magmatic cumulates in elongate magmatic pockets occurring along spreading plate boundaries; exposed in accreted terranes as part of ophiolite assemblage. Autoliths in the tectonite peridotite (alpine) usually occur within the lower part of the ophiolite complex and are highly deformed and serpentinized. Pods may lie near the transition zone below magmatic cumulates in the sequence. Ore bodies are massive to disseminated chromite surrounded by a thin dunite halo in a harzburgite host, and the ore body host contact is generally sharp.

B. Geologic Environment Definition

Remote sensing techniques may be used to detect and map ultramafic belts and intrusive complexes by overall reflectance (albedo), thermal properties, and geobotanical changes (Barrington, 1991; Longshaw and Gilbertson, 1975). The Semail ophiolite in Oman has been mapped and its units subdivided using Landsat TM data (Abrams, 1987). Ophiolite belts are characterized by aeromagnetic data as en echelon belts of short wavelength, high gradient anomalies (Heinz, 1989), and chains of narrow local positive and negative magnetic anomalies (Menaker, 1981). Aeromagnetic surveys and regional gravity data have been used to delineate the extent and shape of large layered intrusions (Blakely, 1984; Gould and others, 1985; Kleinkopf, 1985; Blakely and Zientek, 1985). Detailed gravity data have been used to estimate thickness and subsurface form of ophiolite massifs (Sharp, 1989). Detailed magnetic prospecting has helped map ophiolite sequences under sedimentary cover (Bozzo and others, 1984). Integrated ground magnetic and gravity surveys have been successful in finding and determining the size and shape of buried ophiolite massifs (Babadzhanyan, 1983). Additionally, integrated aeromagnetic, regional and detailed gravity and electromagnetic data were utilized to map the extent and structure of a layered intrusive in South Africa (Gould and others, 1985). Gravity and electrical data have helped determine horizon thickness and structure at the Bushveld complex (de Beer and others, 1987; Hattineh, 1980). Other examples of the utilization of integrated geophysical methods to aid in defining the size, shape or depth of ultramafic complexes are: the Great Dyke of Rhodesia (Weiss, O. 1940); ultramafic rocks in northern California (Irwin, W.P. 1962); ultramafic rocks in the Appalachian province (Zietz, I. and Bhattacharyya, B.K. 1975); Papuan ultramafic belt, New Guinea (Milsom, J., 1973); ultramafic rocks in the eastern Mediterranean (Rabinowitz and Ryant W.B.F. 1970), ultramafic rocks in former U.S.S.R. (Nepomnyashchikh, A. 1959; Moskaleva, S.V. and Zotova, I.F. 1965); Camaguey ultramafic massif, Cuba (Shablinskiy, G.N. and Damian, F. 1987) .

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C. Deposit Definition

For several decades integrated geophysical methods have been used for chromite exploration. Gravimetric, magnetic, electrical, electromagnetic and seismic surveys have all been applied. The literature shows exploration surveys have been carried out in the U.S.A., former U.S.S.R., South Africa, Rhodesia, Albania, Turkey, Finland, Cuba, Greece, Philippines, Yugoslavia, New-Caledonia, China, Sudan, and other countries.

Test holes were drilled on the crests of 106 gravity anomalies in Cuba. The results of drilling revealed that ten anomalies overlie deposits of chromite (Davis, W.E. et al., 1957). Gravity methods have been successfully used for the exploration of chromite in the Urals and Kazakhstan. Positive gravity anomalies due to chromite ores, as a rule, have an intensity of 0.8-1.0 mgals, their areas ranging from 0.1-0.2 km². Chromite orebodies at a depth of 150 m were clearly identified from gravity data (Klichnikov, V.A., and Segalovich V.I., 1970). Large chromite deposits are readily identifiable using gravity techniques even in rugged topography (Yungul, 1956). Ground magnetic surveys have had varying results. Since chromite is moderately magnetic, direct detection may only be achieved if the host rock is uniformly nonmagnetic (Hawkes, 1951). Integration of gravity and magnetic techniques have proven to be useful. A combination of refraction seismic, ground magnetic, and complex resistivity methods was found to be effective in the identification of podiform chromite deposits (Wynn, J.C., 1981, 1983). Very Low Frequency Electromagnetic (VLF-EM) have yielded good resolution in exploration for podiform chromite in Maryland (Miller, J.P.,1981). Chromite deposits in Kazakhstan were identified in boreholes by means of nuclear logging. (Karanikolo, V.F. et al., 1968).

D. Size and shape of deposit

In stratiform complexes groups of layers are continuous and uniform in thickness and may be traceable for miles. Podiform chromite deposits are in the form of pods, lenses, veins, tabular, pencil-shaped, disseminated schlieren, or irregular in form. Most pods are small, but large bodies are known in Kazahstan, Kempirsai; Albania, Bulqiza deposit; Philippines, Coto orebody.

Ε.	Physical Properties (units)	Deposit	Host rocks			
			Dunite	Peridotite	Serpentinite	
1.	Density (gm/cc)	3.0-4.6 (42,63)	2.7-3.3(23)	2.8-3.33 (82)	2.0-2.7(32,82)	
2.	Porosity (%)	0.2-3.8(78)	0.3(13)	0.1-0.8	2.5-10	
3.	Susceptibility (10 ⁻⁵ SI)	20-9502 ^(5,26)	30-200 (52,63)	200-3000 (52,63)	30-6000 (26)	
4.	Remanence (10 ⁻⁵ SI)	100-8100 (30)	10-1800 (26)	20-1300 (26)	10-9500(30)	
5.	Resistivity (ohm-m)	8500 average	64000	68000	10000	
6.	IP Effect (%)	0.2-18(26)	0.2-2.0	0.2-2.0	0.2-50(26)	

7.	Seismic Velocity Vp (km/sec)	4.5-9	.5	5.7-8.9(13)	6.2-10	4.2-4.5
8.	Radioelements K (ppm) U (ppm) Th (ppm)	very	low	10-900 ⁽⁷⁴⁾ 0.001 1-0.001	1000-10000 ⁽⁷⁴⁾ ? 0.1	1000 ⁽⁷⁴⁾ 1-0.1 0.001

F. Remote Sensing Characteristics

The rock spectra, indicate that chromite bearing host lithologies should be distinguishable from surrounding ultramafic and mafic rocks using remote sensing techniques (Hunt, G.R. and Wynn, J.C., 1979). Biogeochemical studies show that chromite poisons vegetation in a very distinctive manner, and the amount of serpentinization strongly controls both density and species of vegetation (Wynn, 1981). TM data were found to be extremely useful for mapping and subdividing the units making up the Semail ophiolite in Oman (Abrams, M., 1986).

G. Comments

Gravity studies in many different areas (Kazakhstan, Turkey, Cuba, Albania, Philippines, India, etc.) indicate that the gravity method is the most effective geophysical method for podiform chromite exploration. A typical podiform chromite deposit has a positive density contrast of about 0.8-1.5 gm/cc over the host rocks, which often produces recognizable gravity anomalies. Magnetic studies have been carried out by several investigators on chromite bodies world-wide. Results obtained in Turkey, Finland, Albania, India, Philippines indicate that this method may not be so discouraging as reported by some authors. Electrical and electromagnetic methods (IP, Complex resistivity, VLF-EM) have yielded good resolution in exploration tests over podiform chromite. Seismic field data appear to show strong velocity highs related to massive chromite contrasted with the surrounding, low velocity serpentinized peridotite (Wynn, J.C., 1981; Reid, A.B., and others, 1980).

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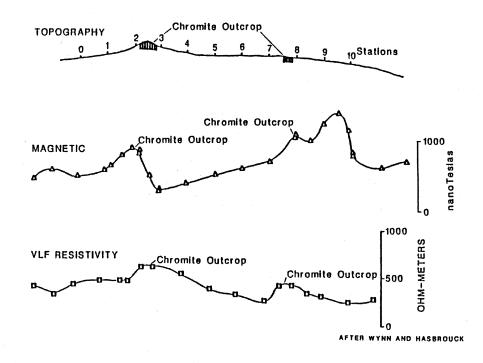
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^{*}Papers considered to be of particular significance for exploration

GEOPHYSICAL DATA RED MOUNTAIN, CALIFORNIA, USA



SEISMIC TRAVERSE RED MOUNTAIN, CALIFORNIA, USA

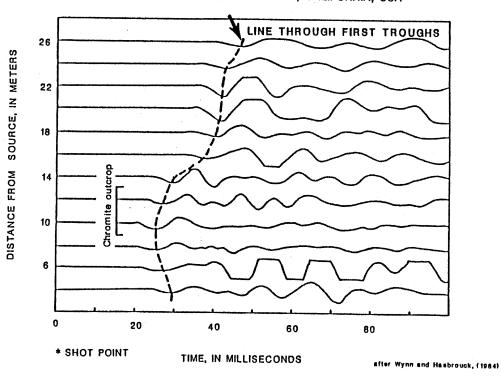


Figure 1. Magnetic data, electromagnetic data (VLF resistivity) and seismic data at the Red Mountain chromite deposit, California. (after Wynn and Hasbrouck, 1984)

CHROMITE OUTCROP VELOCITY ~ 5KM/SEC

GÖLALAN DEPOSIT, TURKEY

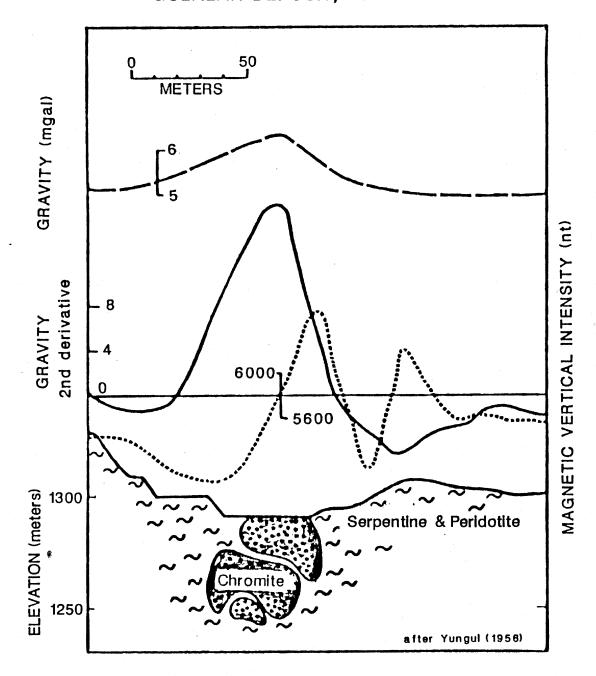


Figure 2. Bouguer gravity, 2nd derivative of gravity data, and the magnetic vertical intensity over the Golalan chromite deposit, Turkey. (after Yungul, 1956)

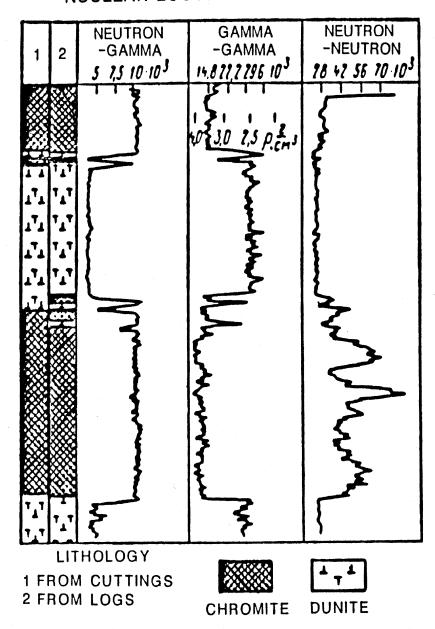
DRILL HOLE

(after SIIKARLA, 1962)

GRAVITY (MGAL)

Figure 3. Bouguer gravity and magnetic vertical intensity profile data over the Kemi stratiform chromite deposit, Finland. (after Siikarla, 1962)

NUCLEAR LOGGING FOR CHROMITE



(after MILETSKIY and others, 1973)

Figure 4. Borehole profiles using a combination of nuclear geophysical methods from a chromite deposit in Kazakstan. (Miletskiy and others, 1973)

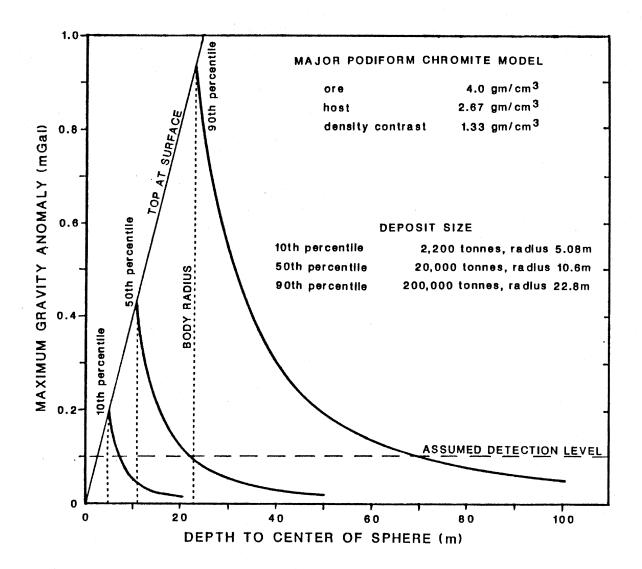


Figure 5. Graph showing the maximum gravity anomaly due to a spherical body of chromite, 4.0 grams per cubic centimeter in a 2.67 grams per cubic centimeter host as a function of depth of burial for bodies of 0.0022 M, 0.02 M, and 0.2 M tonnes. Size range of ore bodies represent the 10th, 50th and 90th percentiles of major podiform chromite deposits from Singer and others (1986).